

Landscape Appraisal / Study

Proposed Residential Development Scheme
St. John's Farm, Trout Lane, West Sussex, RH13 0JN



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PLANNING ISSUE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Brief and Background

- 1.1.1 Ramsay & Co has been commissioned by Chidhurst to undertake a Landscape Appraisal / Study in support of a planning application for a new residential scheme at St. Johns Farm, Trout Lane, Brooks Green, RH13 0JN.
- 1.1.2 The proposed scheme would remove a number of low grade, agricultural buildings and replace them with 4 no. detached residential units. A converted Sussex Barn to the south-eastern edge would be retained and does not form part of the development scheme.
- 1.1.3 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition) state that: *The principles and processes of LVIA can also be used to assist in the 'Appraisal' of forms of land use change or development that fall outside the requirements of the EIA Directive and RegulationsLocal Planning Authorities may ask for such 'Appraisals' where planning applications raise concerns about effects on the landscape and/or visual amenity.....*
- 1.1.4 This report is not intended as a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal / Assessment (LVIA) and should not be interpreted as such. It does not strictly follow the methodology as laid out with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition). It is intended to provide an overview of the existing landscape character and visual amenity as well as any constraints which may inform the proposed scheme and mitigating planting design.

1.2 The Purpose of the Report

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a study of the existing landscape and visual condition in relation to the proposed development site area.
- 1.2.2 The main objectives of this report are to:
- *describe the baseline condition of the proposed development site and surrounding area;*
 - *describe the proposed development scheme;*
 - *identify relevant, existing landscape character assessments;*
 - *describe the landscape character in relation to the proposed development scheme;*
 - *record and describe representational views in relation to the proposed development site and assess likely visual effects in relation to the proposed development scheme.*
- 1.2.3 The following planning documents are referred to in this report:

- Horsham District Council: Horsham District Planning Framework;
- Shipley Neighbourhood Plan.

- 1.2.4 This report has been prepared in accordance with the following guidance:
- *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment published by Natural England 2014;*
 - *Visual representation of Development Proposals: Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Published by the Landscape Institute.*

- 1.2.5 The following Landscape Character Assessments and digital resources were referred to - underlined text include a digital link to the original document:
- Natural England - National Character Areas Profile: NCA 121 Low Weald. (2013);
 - WSCC Landscape Character Assessment (2003): LW5 – Southern Low Weald;
 - Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (2003): G4 Southwater and Shipley Wooded Farmlands;
 - *MAGIC Interactive Map, Defra and Natural England.*

1.3 Field Survey Methodology and Viewpoint Images

- 1.3.1 The site survey visit was carried out by Andrew Ramsay BA (Hons) MALA CMLI on the 08th of September 2025 and conducted from Public Rights of Way and Public Highways surrounding the St. Johns Farm site - weather conditions were slightly overcast with intermittent sunny spells. It should be noted the site survey was conducted during early Autumn when deciduous vegetation was generally in leaf - views would likely be more open during late Autumn, Winter and early Spring when deciduous vegetation would generally be out of leaf.
- 1.3.2 The photographs were all taken with a Canon EOS R [Full Frame] digital camera with a 50mm lens approximately 1.5 - 1.7m above the existing ground level. Whilst the relevant guidance was referred to (*Visual representation of Development Proposals: Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Published by the Landscape Institute*) it was interpreted to suit the requirements of this study.

2.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

2.1 Proposed Residential Development Scheme

- 2.1.1 The proposed scheme comprises demolishing and removing the existing agricultural / light industrial buildings and shipping containers, replacing them with 4 no. new residential dwellings. The layouts have been informed by a holistic, landscape led approach and the proposed elevational designs have a clear

agricultural vernacular style - reflecting the semi-rural location. The access would be via an existing private metalled road which runs north-east off Trout Lane.

- 2.1.2 Full details of the proposed architectural arrangement and elevational design is illustrated within the Starc Architects drawings, specifications and reports.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

3.1 District Planning Policy Overview

- 3.1.1 Horsham District Council formally submitted a new Local Plan and supporting documents to the Planning Inspectorate on Friday 26 July 2024. In the meantime the Horsham District Planning Framework [HDPF - Nov 2015] guides development in the Horsham District up to 2031.

- 3.1.2 The relevant Horsham District Council planning policies with regard to the proposed St. Johns farm development site and landscape / visual amenity are considered to be as follows:

- *HDPF / 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character;*
- *HDPF / 26: Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection;*
- *HDPF / 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity;*
- *HDPF / 34 Cultural and Heritage Assets.*

Policy 25 Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

- 3.1.3 *The Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats will be protected against inappropriate development.*

The Council will support development proposals which:

- 1. Protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation.*
- 2. Maintain and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network and addresses any identified deficiencies in the District.*
- 3. Maintains and enhances the existing network of geological sites and biodiversity, including safeguarding existing designated sites and species, and ensures no net loss of wider biodiversity and provides net gains in biodiversity where possible.*
- 4. Conserve and where possible enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park.*

Policy 26 Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection

- 3.1.4 *Outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location, and in addition meet one of the following criteria:*

- 1. Support the needs of agriculture or forestry;*
- 2. Enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;*
- 3. Provide for quiet informal recreational use; or*
- 4. Enable the sustainable development of rural areas.*

In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves, and/or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located, including; 1. The development pattern of the area, its historical and ecological qualities, tranquillity and sensitivity to change; 2. The pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, waterbodies and other features; and 3. The landform of the area.

Policy 31 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

- 3.1.5 *1. Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss, and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained.*
- 2. Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity, and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and /or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites. The Council will also support development which makes a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, and linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks.....*

3.2 Shipley Parish Neighbourhood Plan [2019-31]

- 3.2.1 *The Introduction to the Shipley Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan states: Shipley Parish is an 'unclassified' settlement according to the HDC Planning Framework. As such, HDC will not require any sites to be allocated to Shipley Parish. This means our approach to planning positively for development will be through encouraging and supporting modest windfall proposals that can be satisfactorily accommodated, without undermining the quality of life for local people.*
- 3.2.2 *Within the introduction the plan says.....These are policies that will influence future planning applications and decisions in the area. But the Neighbourhood Plan is much more than this. It represents the community's manifesto for the Parish, bringing together more than just traditional planning matters.*

- 3.2.3 The following policies are considered relevant to the proposed development scheme with regard to landscape character and visual amenity:

Policy Ship HD1: New housing development

- 3.2.4 *Applications for housing developments within Shipley and Coolham villages, and Dragons Green and Brooks Green hamlets, will be considered favourably where the proposals meet all of the following criteria:*

Development proposals will be supported, provided their design seeks to maintain or increase biodiversity, in particular:

- 1. The proposed development is for an infill gap, or on previously developed land, within the continuity of existing buildings.*
- 2. The proposed development will not result in the outward extension of the villages or hamlets onto greenfield land.*
- 3. The proposed development delivers new affordable housing.*
- 4. The proposed development reflects the scale and density of existing development in the village or hamlet where it is located.*
- 5. The proposed development responds positively to Shipley Parish Design Guidance in Appendix 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan.*

Policy Ship HD3: High quality design

- 3.2.5 *All proposals for new development in Shipley Parish are expected to respond positively to local design characteristics and features as set out in the Shipley Parish*

Design Guidance (in Appendix 2 of this Neighbourhood Plan). New development should be of a size and scale which respects and, where possible, enhances the character of the area or locality, using materials typical of the area.

Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate, through submission documents, how the proposed scheme responds to the Shipley Parish Design Guidance.

Any proposal for new affordable housing should be designed such that it is 'tenureblind', i.e. it is of an equal quality in terms of its design and use of materials compared to the market element and it should be integrated into the overall proposal.

4.0 EXISTING BASELINE CONDITIONS

4.1 Landscape Context

- 4.1.1 The site was formerly a working farm which has diversified from traditional agricultural to processing and storing timber products for domestic and commercial use [home burning and biomass] as well as commercial landscape products. The St. Johns Farm site is characterised by a mix of former agricultural buildings [including open fronted barns], shipping containers and vehicle workshop, to the centre of

the former farmstead lies a traditional Sussex Barn which has been converted to residential use and is excluded from the development scheme.

- 4.1.2 Several of the buildings house equipment related to the processing and storage of timber products and there are also piles of logs and woodchips. To the west, a private metalled road provides access of Trout Lane and to the east is a residential dwelling: *Heathfield House* which lies south of a mown grass area.

4.2 Existing Vegetation

- 4.2.1 Immediately north of the St. Johns Farm access and site is Madgeland Wood which is designated as Ancient Replanted Woodland. There are intermittent tree specimens and tree groups to the southern and eastern edges of the proposed development site.

4.3 Proposed Development Site Area: Baseline Topography

- 4.3.1 The proposed development site and surrounding area are generally even with a slight rise from south to north.

4.4 Public Rights of Way

- 4.4.1 A designated PRoW: Footpath [Ref: SHI-1902] runs along the private access road [off Trout Lane] and through the farm area continuing north to a PRoW: Bridleway [Ref: SHI-1901]. To the east, a PRoW: Footpath [Ref: SHI-2812] runs off SHI-1902 to the edge of the woodland block.

5.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

5.1 Existing Landscape Character Assessments – Overview

National Landscape Character: National Character Area 121 – Low Weald

- 5.1.1 The proposed development site area lies within the *National Character Area 121 - Low Weald* which: *is a broad, low-lying clay vale which largely wraps around the northern, western and southern edges of the High Weald. It is predominantly agricultural, supporting mainly pastoral farming owing to heavy clay soils, with horticulture and some arable on lighter soils in the east, and has many densely wooded areas with a high proportion of ancient woodland.....*

- 5.1.2 Key relevant characteristics include:

- *Broad, low-lying, gently undulating clay vales with outcrops of limestone or sandstone providing local variation.*

- *The underlying geology has provided materials for industries including iron working, brick and glass making, leaving pits, lime kilns and quarries. Many of the resulting exposures are critical to our understanding of the Wealden environment.*
- *A generally pastoral landscape with arable farming associated with lighter soils on higher ground and areas of fruit cultivation in Kent. Land use is predominantly agricultural but with urban influences, particularly around Gatwick, Horley and Crawley.*
- *Field boundaries of hedgerows and shaws (remnant strips of cleared woodland) enclosing small, irregular fields and linking into small and scattered linear settlements along roadsides or centred on greens or commons. Rural lanes and tracks with wide grass verges and ditches.*
- *Small towns and villages are scattered among areas of woodland, permanent grassland and hedgerows on the heavy clay soils where larger 20th-century villages have grown around major transport routes.*
- *Frequent north–south routeways and lanes, many originating as drove roads, along which livestock were moved to downland grazing or to forests to feed on acorns.*
- *Small areas of heathland particularly associated with commons such as Ditchling and Chailey. Also significant historic houses often in parkland or other designed landscapes.*
- *The Low Weald boasts an intricate mix of woodlands, much of it ancient, including extensive broadleaved oak over hazel and hornbeam coppice, shaws, small field copses and tree groups, and lines of riparian trees along watercourses. Veteran trees are a feature of hedgerows and in fields.*
- *Many small rivers, streams and watercourses with associated watermeadows and wet woodland.*
- *Abundance of ponds, some from brick making and quarrying, and hammer and furnace ponds, legacies of the Wealden iron industry.*
- *Traditional rural vernacular of local brick, weatherboard and tile-hung buildings plus local use of distinctive Horsham slabs as a roofing material. Weatherboard barns are a feature. Oast houses occur in the east and use of flint is notable in the south towards the South Downs.*

Regional Landscape Character: West Sussex County Council Landscape Character Assessment 2003 – Landscape Character LW6 - Central Low Weald

- 5.1.3 The St. Johns Farm site lies within the WSCC Landscape Character Area: LW6: *Central Low Weald*. This landscape character assessment is described as follows: *This large Character Area is in the centre of the county stretching from Slinfold to West Grinstead. It is a mainly pastoral landscape with a well-wooded character. Local character varies depending on the presence or otherwise of large parkland estates, concentrations of horse paddocks, and major roads and suburban development. Many small farms and cottages are concentrated along lanes and a few historic linear villages are often located at crossroads. These villages, especially those on the major roads, tend to have a suburban character.*

5.1.4 Key landscape characteristics are summarised as:

- *Gently undulating landform.*
- *Predominantly small to medium-sized pasture fields, enclosed by woodlands, shaws and hedgerows.*
- *Some larger arable fields.*
- *Local concentrations of horse grazed paddocks and golf course development.*
- *Dense cover of ancient broadleaved woodlands and conifer plantations.*
- *Small stream valleys draining to the Adur and the Arun.*
- *Some large country houses and parkland.*
- *Green lanes and droveways.*
- *Many scattered, traditional Wealden farmsteads and cottages and a few linear villages.*
- *Crossed by major transport links north south, both road and rail.*

District Landscape Character: Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment 2003 – Landscape Character Area: G11 – Southwater and Shipley Wooded Farmlands

5.1.5 The St. Johns Farm site lies within G11 – Southwater and Shipley Wooded Farmlands which is described as follows: *This is a well wooded landscape lying on the Weald Clay and Horsham Stone. The landform gently undulates with small streams in gentle valleys flowing down towards the Adur. Due to the enclosing presence of woodlands, views are confined. In the south there is a strong parkland influence with the clumps of parkland trees, mixed tree belts and lakes of Knepp Castle and West Grinstead Park dominating the landscape. Away from the A24 and A272 roads, the landscape is surprisingly remote. Occasional small farms nestle in the woodlands.*

5.1.6 The key characteristics are described as:

- *Gently undulating, strongly wooded landscape.*
- *Many small to medium size woodland blocks enclosing an irregular pattern of pasture fields.*
- *Small hamlets and isolated farms.*
- *Local mix of traditional building materials, brick, tile hanging and Horsham stone slabs.*
- *Large historic parklands of Knepp Castle and West Grinstead Park.*
- *Visual and noise intrusion from the A24/A272.*

Proposed Development Site: Landscape Character Assessment

5.1.7 The proposed development site comprises a cluster of former agricultural buildings, a light industrial unit which is used as a vehicle repair shop, and several shipping containers. The layout is characteristically random and haphazard reflecting a common Sussex characteristic in farmsteads which have gradually expanded over time. The site area is accessed by a tree lined, private road which runs east off Trout Lane.

- 5.1.8 St. Johns Farm was formerly a sussex farmstead however traditional agricultural operations have now been replaced with the processing and managing of timber for home use and commercial heating fuel. As well as logs and biomass, landscaping products [woodchip / mulch] are also sold. The site area features a number of timber / log piles as well as a large woodchip storage area to the southern edge. To the south-east is an open grassland area with two residential dwellings to the southern edge.
- 5.1.9 The proposed development site and access is edged with dense woodland to the west, north and north-east [Madgeland Wood]. There are intermittent trees and tree groups to the southern and eastern edges and grassland fields to the south and east which are delineated with mature trees and understorey scrub.
- 5.1.10 The St. Johns Farm site is enclosed by a combination of woodland and mature trees and the generally even topography results in a very constrained character. The existing buildings which lie within the proposed development site [red line] area are considered to be of limited architectural quality being utilitarian in design and appearance, some could also be described as slightly dilapidated.
- 5.1.11 The existing site and boundary features are shown in *Appendix A: Existing Landscape Features*.

6.0 MITIGATION

6.1 Proposed Mitigating Measures

- 6.1.1 The proposed development scheme would retain and protect all the existing trees and shrubs to the boundaries. Native species ribbons of scrub and tree specimens would enhance the edges of the existing access drive softening views of new residential frontages. Garden areas would have native species hedgerow and tree specimens to the edges.

7.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL

7.1 Viewpoints and Anticipated Visual Impact

- 7.1.1 The viewpoint photographs are shown in *Appendix B: Viewpoint Photographs* and locations are shown on *RCo591 / Fig 01 / Viewpoint Locations and PRoW*. The degree of visual effects with regard to the proposed St. Johns Farm residential scheme are defined within Table 01 below:

Table 01: Overall Degree of Visual Effects: Definitions and Descriptions	
Neutral	
No Change	<i>No part of the proposed development would be discernible in the view.</i>
Negligible Neutral	<i>There would be little effect within the context of existing landscape character and visual amenity.</i>
Adverse	
Low / Slight Adverse	<i>The proposals would constitute only a minor component within the existing landscape character / Awareness of the proposals would not have a marked effect upon the existing landscape quality, pattern and landform.</i>
Moderate Adverse	<i>The proposals would form a visible and recognisable new element within the existing landscape and negatively affect the existing landscape character.</i>
Beneficial	
Low / Slight	<i>The proposals would improve the landscape quality and character as well as being appropriate to the landscape scale, quality and pattern. The proposed scheme might provide some restoration of lost or degraded landscape features.</i>
Moderate	<i>The proposals would integrate very well within the existing landscape character and / or improve the overall landscape quality through restoration of missing or degraded landscape features due to other uses or neglect.</i>

Viewpoint 01 – Trout Lane Looking North-East

- 7.1.2 This viewpoint lies to the western edge of Trout Lane and looks north-east up the St. Johns Farm access, the view demonstrates the sylvan character of both the private farm access and public highway. There is a partial view of one of the existing farm buildings at the end of the access however existing woodland and trees limit and constrain perceptibility of the farm area and wider landscape. Views of new residential dwellings would be largely constrained by existing vegetation and therefore the overall degree of visual effect is anticipated to be **Negligible Neutral**.

Viewpoint 02 – PRow: Footpath Looking South

- 7.1.3 Viewpoint 02 lies to a PRow: Footpath which runs north to the western edge of the farm area, to the right and left of the image are existing buildings which would be removed and replaced with detached residential buildings, further north the single-storey building would be removed - opening up views to Units 02 & 03 to the northern edge of the proposed site. The proposed soft landscape would filter views of the new buildings and the removal of the central, single-storey building would open up the site. It is considered the proposed scheme would enhance the setting of the footpath providing a biodiverse range of native species, trees and shrubs to the edges. Therefore there would be a **Low / Slight Beneficial** overall degree of visual effect as a result of the proposed scheme.

Viewpoint 03 – PRoW: Footpath Looking North-East

- 7.1.4 This viewpoint lies just north of *Viewpoint 02* and looks north from a location to the same PRoW: Footpath. The view demonstrates the built character of the farm area and shows the dense woodland which lies beyond the open fronted barn to the north. The single-storey building to the right of the image would be removed and the buildings to the west and north replaced with residential dwellings. The proposed development scheme would open up views and remove buildings which are of limited architectural quality, replacing them high-quality residential dwellings which reflect the semi-rural location and context. There would be ***Low / Slight Beneficial*** overall degree of visual effect as a result of the proposed scheme.

Viewpoint 04 – PRoW: Footpath Looking South-East

- 7.1.5 Viewpoint 04 lies to the same location as Viewpoint 03 and looks south-east down the footpath route which follows the eastern edge of the proposed development site. To the right of the image, the existing building would be replaced with a new residential dwelling and the building to the left would be removed opening up views of the historic [converted] Sussex Barn. It is considered the scheme would enhance the setting of the footpath with new soft landscaping to the edge and the removal of a poor quality building [to the left of the image], there would be a ***Negligible Neutral*** overall degree of visual effect as a result of the proposed residential scheme.

Viewpoint 05 – PRoW: Footpath Looking South

- 7.1.6 This viewpoint lies to a PRoW: Footpath where it meets a PRoW: Bridleway north of the St. Johns Farm site. The view looks south down the footpath and there are partial views of existing buildings however woodland generally obscures perceptibility of the site area. Views of the St. Johns Farm site from locations east and west of this location [to the designated PRoW: Bridleway] are constrained by dense, intervening woodland. It is anticipated there would be a ***Negligible Neutral*** overall degree of visual effect as a result of the proposed scheme.

Viewpoint 06 – PRoW: Footpath Looking North-West

- 7.1.7 Viewpoint 06 looks north-west from a location to a PRoW: Footpath, views of the St. Johns Farm site are generally constrained by intervening trees and shrubs which edge the grassland field although there are some partial views of existing buildings through small gaps. The viewpoint is included to demonstrate views from locations to the wider landscape are generally limited by woodland and field edge vegetation. Existing trees and shrubs would limit views of the proposed scheme and therefore there would be a ***Negligible Neutral*** overall degree of visual effect as a result of the proposed residential development scheme.

Viewpoint 07 – PRoW: Footpath Looking South-West

- 7.1.8 This viewpoint looks south-west from a location to a PRoW: Footpath to the north-east corner of the proposed development site. The view shows the large, agricultural building which lies to the northern edge of the St. Johns site and associated farming/timber processing paraphernalia, there is also a view of the

Sussex Barn pitched roof over an intervening single-storey building. The existing open-fronted barn [to the right of the image] would be removed and replaced with two detached dwellings however the edge of the footpath would be enhanced with new, native species planting. It is considered the proposed scheme would enhance the setting of the footpath with new planting and clearly defined residential edge. There would be a **Negligible Neutral** overall degree of visual effect as a result of the proposed residential development scheme.

Viewpoint 08 – PRow: Footpath Looking West

- 7.1.9 Viewpoint 08 looks west from a location to a PRow: Footpath which lies close to the converted Sussex Barn which lies outwith of the proposed development site. The open fronted, dilapidated building would be retained and the larger barn removed and replaced with a new detached dwelling. To the right of centre, the single-storey building would also be removed. The new residential dwelling would be set back off the edge of the hardstanding access and enhanced with a ribbon of new planting - softening and filtering views south-west. There would be a **Negligible Neutral** overall degree of visual effect as a result of the proposed residential development scheme.

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Landscape Character

- 8.1.1 The St. Johns Farm comprises a number of low grade agricultural / light industrial buildings and traditional [converted] Sussex Barn which are assembled in a characteristically random arrangement at the end of a private access track off Trout Lane, Brooks Green. The site was formerly a traditional Sussex farmstead however in more recent times some of the buildings are rented for commercial use [a motor vehicle repair workshop was in evidence at the time of the site visit] and the main farming business has diversified into the processing of timber for domestic / commercial fuel and landscaping products [bark chippings / mulch].
- 8.1.2 St. Johns Farm is considered a brownfield site with existing buildings and extensive areas of hard standing. The existing agricultural / light industrial buildings and shipping containers are considered to have limited architectural merit and make little contribution to landscape character. The proposed scheme would remove and replace three of the buildings as well as removing a single-storey building - the converted Sussex Barn to the eastern edge of the site lies outwith of the proposed development site.
- 8.1.3 To the east and south lie residential dwellings which lie south of an open, mown grassland area. The St. Johns Farm site lies to the edge of a large block of woodland [Madgeland Wood] which is designated as Ancient Replanted Woodland and there are intermittent trees and tree groups to the southern and eastern edges. The

dense woodland, trees and generally even topography results in a constrained and enclosed character which limits views in and out of the proposed development site.

- 8.1.4 The site is considered to make little contribution to landscape character with a number of buildings in a dilapidated condition, piles of timber logs and random agricultural and motor vehicle associated paraphernalia. The proposed scheme would provide an opportunity to remove and replace low grade buildings with new dwellings which offer contextual architectural design and which reflect the semi-rural location in the wider Brooks Green landscape. It is considered the proposed soft landscape would enhance the setting of the designated footpaths which run through and to the edge of the St. John Farm area.

8.2 Visual Effects

- 8.2.1 Perceptibility of the St Johns Farm site from locations to the wider landscape are constrained by the dense boundary vegetation and generally even topography.

Table 02: Summary of Visual Effects	
VIEWPOINT	ANTICIPATED VISUAL IMPACT
Viewpoint 01 - Trout Lane Looking North-East	Negligible Neutral
Viewpoint 02 - PRoW: Footpath Looking South	Low / Slight Beneficial
Viewpoint 03 - PRoW: Footpath Looking North-East	Low / Slight Beneficial
Viewpoint 04 - PRoW: Footpath Looking South-East	Negligible Neutral
Viewpoint 05 - PRoW: Footpath Looking South	Negligible Neutral
Viewpoint 06 - PRoW: Footpath Looking North-West	Negligible Neutral
Viewpoint 07 - PRoW: Footpath Looking South-West	Negligible Neutral
Viewpoint 08 - PRoW: Footpath Looking West	Negligible Neutral

- 8.2.2 The perceptibility of the St. Johns Farm site is constrained by dense woodland to the west and north.

Road Users

- 8.2.3 *Viewpoint 01* lies to the western edge of Trout Lane and looks down the private, farm access – visual receptors would have a **Negligible Neutral** overall degree of visual effect.

Recreational Users

- 8.2.4 A designated footpath runs north-east off Trout Lane, through the farm area and then heads north-east through Madgeland Wood. A separate PRoW: Footpath runs south of the converted Sussex Barn and then heads north-east and then follows the southern edge of Madgeland Wood.
- 8.2.5 The designated footpaths will enable near-distance views of the proposed dwellings. *Viewpoints 02, 03 and 04* all lie within the farm area, *Viewpoints 02 & 03* are anticipated to have a ***Low / Slight Beneficial*** overall degree of landscape effect. *Viewpoint 04* would have a ***Negligible Neutral*** overall degree of visual effect.
- 8.2.6 *Viewpoint 05* lies to the north of St. Johns Farm within Madgeland Wood and is anticipated to have a ***Negligible Neutral*** overall degree of visual effect. Further south, *Viewpoint 06* lies to a designated footpath to the edge of a grassland field and is anticipated to also have a ***Negligible Neutral*** overall degree of visual effect.
- 8.2.7 Two locations to the edge of the farm area [*Viewpoint 07 & 08*] would have a ***Negligible Neutral*** overall degree of visual effect.

8.3 Conclusions

- 8.3.1 The St. Johns Farm site comprises a number of low quality agricultural buildings some of which are somewhat dilapidated. Formerly a traditional Sussex farm the main activity is now timber processing and this is evidenced by log and woodchip piles within the farm area. A building to the western edge is home to a motor vehicle service and repair workshop with several adjacent shipping containers which are used for storage. To the eastern edge is a traditional Sussex Barn which has been converted to residential use [and which lies outwith of the proposed development site], further east is an open grassland area with two residential dwellings to the southern edge.
- 8.3.2 The proposed scheme would remove the existing agricultural / storage buildings and replace them with a total of 4 no. detached residential units. The elevational treatments have been sensitively designed to feature contextual, locally sourced construction materials and would reflect the semi-rural location.
- 8.3.3 Proposed native species scrub, hedgerow and tree planting to the edges of the proposed curtilages would soften and filter near-distance views of the proposed scheme from locations to the designated footpaths.
- 8.3.4 It is considered the St. Johns Farm site has a constrained and enclosed character with perceptibility from locations to the wider landscape constrained by a combination of dense woodland, field edge vegetation and the generally even topography. It is considered the existing layout, land-uses and appearance of the agricultural buildings make little contribution to landscape character. The proposed scheme would provide a contextual, landscape-led scheme which would enhance

the setting of the designated footpaths and provide a high quality development which reflects the semi-rural location.

- 8.3.5 It is therefore considered the proposed residential development scheme could be accommodated to the St. Johns Farm site without undue harm to the wider Brooks Green landscape character and visual amenity.